

Vermont State Board of Education Monthly Report – September 2009

From the Chair

At its meeting on September 15, 2009, the State Board of Education addressed the following topics:

Board elects new officers – The State Board of Education elected new officers at its September 15, 2009 meeting, the Department of Education announced today. Fayneese Miller of South Burlington was elected Board chair, Ruth Stokes of Williston will continue serving as co-vice-chair, along with Kathy Larsen of Wilmington as second vice-chair. The election was necessitated by the retirement of Chair Tom James.

Miller of South Burlington is the Dean of the College of Education and Social Services at University of Vermont. She came to Vermont after a 20-year career at Brown University where she was associate professor of education and human development and led Brown's Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity and was the university's first coordinator and chair of ethnic studies. Her State Board term will expire in 2012.

Stokes has been a Board member since 2005. Since 1999, she has been the Executive Director of the Vermont Student Opportunity Scholarship Fund (VTSOS). She has served as a state representative for Williston and Richmond and was a member of the University of Vermont Board of Trustees from 1989 to 1995. Stokes has also served on the executive board of the Vermont School Boards Association, and has taught high school science. Her State Board term will end in 2011.

Kathy Larsen of Wilmington spent her 33-year career teaching Vermont students - one year as a paraprofessional, 24 years as a primary grade teacher, and eight as an elementary teaching principal, all but one year at the Deerfield Valley Elementary School. She serves as a mentor and Formative Assessment Project trainer, as well as some substitute teaching to stay in touch with students. She is a member of the advisory board for the Wings Community Program afterschool program and the Deerfield Valley Health Care

Volunteers local healthcare assistance program. Her term expires in 2013.

In addition, student member Robert Kelley of Brandon, who was appointed by Governor Douglas to the Board in August, participated in his first meeting. He is a student at Otter Valley Union High School, and is a student representative to the OVUHS board.

Stephan Morse appointed to the Board – Governor Douglas appointed Stephan Morse of Newfane to the State Board of Education to complete the term vacated by outgoing Board Chair Tom James of Essex. James retired from the Board following its September 15, 2009 meeting. Morse was a member of the Vermont Legislature from 1977 to 1984 and served as Speaker of the House from 1981 to 1984. He has also served on numerous state and local commissions, including the Next Generation Commission in 2006 and is currently chairing a task force charged with finding efficiencies in Vermont State Colleges and the University of Vermont systems. He recently retired as the President and C.E.O. of the Windham Foundation until 2008. Morse's first meeting as a Board member will be on October 20.

2009 Teacher of the Year Named – Craig Divis, a high school social studies teacher at Bellows Falls Union High School in Bellows Falls, was named by the State Board of Education as the 2010 Vermont Teacher of the Year at a ceremony held September 15th at the school. Also honored were:

- Alternate Stacey Endres, a middle school social studies and English teacher at Milton Middle School in Milton.
- Finalist Terry Frey, a K-12 music teacher at Windsor Junior Senior High School and State Street School in Windsor.

As the 2010 Teacher of the Year, Divis will travel statewide visiting schools and working with teachers. In addition, he is Vermont's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers. He will also travel to

Washington, D.C. in spring 2010 for a reception at the White House.

State Board members visited Divis' classroom prior to a school-wide assembly. The lunchtime ceremony included remarks by Divis, 2009 Vermont Teacher of the Year Diana Leddy, Education Commissioner Armando Vilaseca and State Board Chair Tom James. Divis was presented with SMART Board™ equipment and software for his classroom by Brian Scofield of SMART Technologies, with software and materials going to each of the other two finalists. In addition, the Department of Education donated \$2,500 towards classroom-related supplies and activities.

Divis, a resident of Grafton, has been an educator at Bellows Falls for five years, the past two as Social Studies Department Coordinator. He has been a classroom teacher for six years. He received a B.S. in Education from Miami University in 2003, and spent one year as an alternative program teacher in Akron, Ohio prior to coming to Vermont. Divis has worked with the University of Vermont's Asian Studies Outreach Program since 2005 and traveled extensively during the summer.

"The rewards that I find in teaching are when students become passionate about learning and understanding the world, and want to experience it firsthand," he wrote in his nomination packet. "My rewards don't come from grades students get on a test, but from students coming back years after graduation to visit me and tell me about their experiences traveling the world and becoming passionate about learning."

In addition to serving as an advisor to student teachers, he has served as a member of the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union Social Studies Curriculum Committee, is the chair of the Bellows Falls Union High School Social Studies Department, serves as assistant chair to the school's Literacy Action Plan Committee, and is a member of the faculty council.

Principal Chris Hodsden wrote, "Mr. Divis will not only represent our state well as Teacher of the Year, he will represent the field of education well to the general public and the nation."

In his presentation, Commissioner Vilaseca said, "We are fortunate to have someone of Mr. Divis' caliber working here in this state."

During his remarks, Mr. Divis made a point of acknowledging his colleagues and parents. However, he saved his greatest praise for his students, telling them, "I am inspired by you every single day. I am in awe of the accomplishments of those of you in the audience and those who came before. It is to you who I say thank you for without you this would not be possible."

The Vermont Teacher of the Year Program is sponsored by Hannaford Bros. Co.

Strategic Planning

At its June 22-23 planning meeting, the State Board, in collaboration with staff from the Department of Education, met to begin to preliminary work on the next iteration of the Board's and Department's strategic plan. 16 V.S.A. §180 requires a strategic plan and that it be reviewed and updated every 5 years (this is the 5th year). The next step is to re-form the strategic plan (the mission, vision, goals, objectives, indicators of progress) by renewing it to 1) reflect current practice and views, 2) assure that all students graduate from high school globally competitive, and 3) integrate the tenets of the Transformation initiative. That process will include members of the State Board and representatives from Department of Education staff working together to flesh out those goals, and objectives. In addition, there will be multiple opportunities for public engagement, outreach and input. Members of the Board and Department staff held preliminary meetings to begin the development process. For specific information on the process, please see http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/board/packet_archives/packet_09_0915/item_N.pdf.

From the Board

- Kathy Larsen attended two New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) meetings as the Board representative.
- John Hall attended NASBE (National Association of State Boards of Education) New Board Member Institute, held in mid-July in Washington, DC.

- Don Collins updated the Board on the work of the Transformation Policy Commission.
- Fayneese Miller reported on a meeting held at UVM focusing on what the university can do to prepare educators to work and teach in a transformed education system. Board vice chair Ruth Stokes served as a panel member.

From the Commissioner

Statewide Science Assessment Results

Released – Statewide science assessment results for Spring 2009 have been released by the Vermont Department of Education – see http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_assessment/data.html#necap. The results are from the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) science exams, given to Vermont public school students for the second time in grades 4, 8 and 11 in May 2009. Fifty-two percent of Vermont fourth graders tested were proficient or higher in science, up four points from last year. In grade eight, 25 percent were proficient or higher, down one point. In grade 11, 27 percent were proficient or higher, up 2 points. “There is an obvious need for improvement in how our students are learning science,” said Commissioner Armando Vilaseca. “The wide range of results by individual school, from zero percent to 96 percent proficient, shows me that students are capable of achieving the standard, but they are not all receiving the standards-based science curriculum that we expect due to the varied delivery of curriculum in our school districts.” Vilaseca and Department staff members Michal Hock and Gail Hall stressed the need for schools to give standards-based science content a broader emphasis within classrooms, as well the need for districts sending students to a co-serving high school to work on curriculum alignment within their districts. To view the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, see <http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pubs/framework.html>. For more information, contact Michael Hock (Assessment Director) at (802) 828-3115 or Gail Hall (Science Coordinator) at (802) 828-0156.

From the Department

September 30 Southeast SVLC Regional Network Meetings On September 30, the Southeast Southern Vermont Leadership Collaborative (SVLC) and the Department of Education will be offering the third

annual Regional Network Meetings for regional educators. Network meetings will be offered in the content areas of Mathematics, Science, Literacy, Social Studies/Technology, Health and Physical Education. Southeast superintendents and principals are encouraged to share this information with staff. Additional information and registration details on this regional opportunity are available from Mary Ann Minardo, 828-5410 (e-mail maryann.minardo@state.vt.us or Lucille Chicoine, 828-5922 (e-mail lucille.chicoine@state.vt.us), or through the following link: http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/dept/calendar/vpdn_svlc_09_0930.pdf.

2009-10 New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP)

Reading and Mathematics – NECAP

Assessments in Reading and Mathematics for all publicly funded students in grades 3 through 8 and grade 11, plus Writing for all students in grades 5, 8 and 11, will be given from Thursday, October 1 through Thursday, October 22, 2009. Use the following link to view additional information about the schedule, "new" for 2009, ordering tests in Braille or large print, and test coordinator workshops: http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_assessment/necap/educ_necap_assessment_window_fall.pdf.

Science – NECAP Science assessment for grades four, eight and 11 has been scheduled for May 11– 29, 2009.

For additional information, contact Mary Ann Minardo at (802) 828-5410 or maryann.minardo@state.vt.us.

H1N1 Resource for Vermont Schools –

The Department of Education continues to support the Vermont Department of Health in communicating with schools on H1N1. Due to the frequent and timely nature of H1N1 communications, we urge school administrators to visit www.flu.gov or www.healthvermont.gov for the latest guidance and information, and to work closely with your school nurses on planning for this pandemic. For the latest school dismissal guidance, as well as a letter regarding school-located vaccination clinics, visit http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/pgm_media/H1N1_planning.html. Contact: Emily

Pastore, VDH School Nurse Liaison, at (802) 863-7281 or EPastor@vdh.state.vt.us; Jill Remick at (802) 828-3154 or jill.remick@state.vt.us

The Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC): Living in the New Normal (LINN): Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss – In preparation and support for the upcoming deployment of Vermont's National Guard members, the Military Child Education Coalition™ (MCEC) will hold the training Living in the New Normal (LINN): Supporting Children Through Trauma and Loss on October 6-7, from 8:30am-4:00pm at Norwich University. This free professional development program prepares school guidance professionals, educators and community members to recognize and address the issues facing children dealing with separation from a loved one or experiencing trauma, grief and loss due to the loss or injury of a loved one. The MCEC's LINN™ efforts are predicated on the belief that children's inherent attributes of courage and resiliency can be strengthened through deliberate encouragement. Additional information on this opportunity is available from Andrew Hudacs, 828-3892 (andrew.hudacs@state.vt.us) and online registration can be accessed using this link: <http://www.MilitaryChild.org>.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) – Funds provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provide a unique opportunity to jump start school reform and improvement efforts while also saving and creating jobs and stimulating the economy. These one-time resources should be spent in ways most likely to lead to improved results for students, long-term gains in school and school system capacity, and increased productivity and effectiveness. The following link serves as the main clearinghouse for information for Vermont's education community: http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/recovery_act.html. For additional information, contact Rae Ann Knopf, (802) 828-0555, or Rae.Knopf@state.vt.us.

Fall 2009 Vermont Professional Development Network (VPDN) Meetings for Literacy, Math and Science – The Vermont Professional Development Network (VPDN) meetings, sponsored by the department and facilitated by

teacher leaders throughout the state, provide educators with best instructional and assessment practices in literacy, mathematics, and science grade expectations. Meeting content is interactive with opportunities to network with peers. The network meetings are specific to grade level spans and are held at various locations and dates. A schedule, descriptions of meeting content and registration information is available through the following links:

Literacy – http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html#literacy_vpdn

Math – http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html#math_vpdn

Science – http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html#science_vpdn

For additional information on upcoming Department of Education sponsored events for Fall 2009, visit

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/calendar.html>. The calendar is updated regularly.

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For more information on the Vermont State Board of Education, visit:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/mainboard.html>.

To view approved minutes of SBE meetings:

<http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#approved>

To view State Board of Education's Monthly Reports:

http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/board/schedule.html#monthly_reports

2009-2010 State Board of Education Meeting

Dates: August 18; September 15; October 20; November 17; December 15; January 19; February 16; March 16; April TBD; May 18; June 15

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